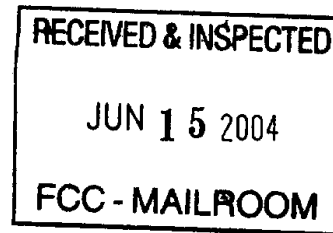


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HT Group, LLC
2021 Monroe Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30324
404.873.5411
FAX 404.873.5415
ctaylor@htgroup.com



Charles E. Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

June 13, 2004

VIA FEDEX

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

RE: MM Docket No. 99-325

Dear Ms. Dortch,

WABE is a public radio station with a dual format of NPR news/information and Classical Music. While we take pride in being the sole provider of each format in the Atlanta market, many of our listeners have begun to openly express frustration with the dual offering. Music devotees point out that there is nowhere else on the dial in Atlanta to hear classical music, while the significant number of listeners who tune in to WABE for NPR news/information programs argue that people who want music can buy the same CDs the station plays but WABE is the only source for National Public Radio news and intelligent talk shows. Many of these people have experiences other cities where there are more than one public radio affiliate, or where the public radio station has two frequencies, each devoted to a different format, where they have come to rely on public radio to provide full time programming of both formats all news and information and all music. The tension between these two groups continues to grow and has resulted in an increasing amount of time, energy spent, and unproductive publicity experienced, in

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trying to guide the station along the fine line between them. It has also cost the station members on both sides of the divide.

Classical Music is disappearing from radio nationwide and, sadly, it has been reduced or eliminated from many school curricula. For many young people in the Atlanta area, WABE provides an educational service as an introduction to Classical Music, and is often their only source for it. Similarly, for those with physical or financial limitations who cannot attend live concert performances, Classical Music on WABE fulfills a life-enriching experience.

Similarly, a rapidly growing number of listeners rely on NPR news programs to keep them informed in a timely manner, and to provide the depth of coverage unique to National Public Radio. In Atlanta, the number of hours devoted to NPR news and talk programming is limited because of WABE's dual format. While the station offers the NPR news magazine programs daily, there are numerous shows of outstanding caliber that WABE cannot air if it is to fulfill the part of its mission dedicated to providing Classical Music. National call-in shows, news documentaries, specific programs related to health, science, and the environment are not in the line-up because of WABE's commitment to air Classical Music during the workday, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, and after 8:00 pm.

The obvious solution is two signals, one all news and information and one all music. Radio stations in the Atlanta market have become very expensive, however, well



beyond the reach of publicly supported, non-profit institutions. Because funds are limited and the cost of acquiring a second frequency is well beyond our means, having a Supplemental Audio Channel.(SAC) becomes an important part of the solution to our dual-format dilemma. If WABE had the capacity to multiplex, its programming could serve both constituencies, attracting a much larger audience which would provide far greater public service to the more than 4 million people in the Atlanta metro area. The SAC would also enable our radio station to use existing programs in expanded fashion, and develop new, more diverse programming whose appeal may be more targeted and defined. It would also permit us to satisfy broadly expressed community needs currently not being served by dramatically expanding our local production of both news and information and music programming.

We strongly hope that the FCC ruling on Digital Radio and SAC will result in WABE's ability to provide diverse and far-reaching service to the greater Atlanta area.

Very truly yours,

Charles E. Taylor
Secretary, PBA Board of Directors
Chair, Program Committee

CET/ko